

Mrs. Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

I am here today because I am concerned about the proposed breed-specific dangerous dog legislation being considered by Montana's legislature. I am a resident of Montana and a responsible dog owner and I oppose the enactment of breed-specific legislation.

I have been a responsible dog owner for several years. My husband and I own several dogs, two of which are pit bulls, and one is an Eng/Am Bulldog, our other three are labs. We love our dogs so much. To ban specific breeds would mean banning me from my family. Our dogs would be deemed "dangerous" by this proposed legislation unfortunately it is simply untrue. My dogs have never bitten or showed signs of aggression or danger to anyone. My dogs have been stewards of good behavior. The fact is that one of our "pit bulls" is our best bird retrieving dog. We have spent many hours training her, and many hours in the field hunting with her. She is amazing, and it is a beautiful thing to watch her working in the field. If the legislature passes this proposed law we will no longer be able to take her out in the fields to go hunting with us, since we would be required to muzzle her when she leaves our house.

My husband and I are so committed to animals that we have dedicated our lives to saving as many dogs from euthanasia as possible. Our Pit Bulls and Eng/Am bulldog were from Life Savers Animal Rescue. This is the rescue group that we volunteer for. The group as a whole would like to express that we do not support this legislation however I was the only one who could attend today. We are always getting new dogs in Life Savers. Realistically 99% of the time when someone leaves a dog on the side of the road, abandons it when they move or just throws it out of the car we have no clue what it is. There are several breed that display like characteristic similar to a pit bull but truly aren't one. Any time there is a cross with one of these breeds confusion can occur. A dog could be a boxer mix, but display characteristics of a "pit bull" and would be sentenced to death under this proposed legislation.

I feel it is unfair to kill dogs and puppies based on the fact people do not like a specific breed, or just don't want a dog anymore. It is also irresponsible of someone to try and eradicate one specific breed of dog because they do not like or fear that breed. What is going to be the next dog that someone fears and wants banned German, Shepherds, Dobermans, Mastiffs, Boxers, Rottweilers, Labs, Pointers, Huskies, Great Danes, Chihuahuas, Jack Russells? In an era where we preach tolerance the legislature is looking at putting in act of discrimination into law. By judging all dogs by one or a few dogs actions would be like sentencing every African American in this country to be executed because one committed murder. After 9-11 did we close down our borders and not let anyone else in? No we raised awareness, and strengthened our laws.

Why did this country spend thousands of dollars re-populating the wolves when they are more dangerous and deadly? Wolves run around killing people's livestock and pets. They pose a risk to peoples well being every day.

Some things you may not know about pit bulls are: Pit Bulls serve as therapy/service dogs, & search and rescue dogs. Petey, the faithful dog on the TV show, The Little Rascals, was a Pit Bull. He spent countless hours with children day after day and never hurt anyone. America's first war dog was a Pit Bull named Stubby. He earned several medals during World War I and was honored at the White House. The Ken-L-Ration dog hero of 1993 was a Pit Bull named Weela. She saved 30 people, 29 dogs, 13 horses and a cat during a flood in Southern California. A Pit Bull named Bogart saved a four-year-old child from drowning in a swimming pool in Florida. Dixie, the Pit Bull, was inducted into the Georgia Animal Hall of Fame after she saved some children from a Cottonmouth snake. However it is stories like these that are never publicized. The media only looks at the negative events surrounding

pit bulls, and a lot of times make an unqualified guess as to what breed an animal is. It is extremely difficult to identify a breed unless you are a highly skilled person qualified to do so. If you do your research go to the National Canine Research Foundation there are countless errors made in the identification of what a dog is, and it truly turns out to be something else.

There are however two main points that many people fail to recognize:

1. There is no such thing as a breed of dog that won't bite.
2. Any poorly trained and unsupervised dog may bite unprovoked. Breed is not the deciding factor, training and supervision is.

I am now going to read an excerpt for a shelter manager that explains exactly what is like when you euthanize an animal

Here's a little euthanasia 101 for those of you that have never witnessed a perfectly healthy, scared animal being "put-down".

First, your pet will be taken from its kennel on a leash. They always look like they think they are going for a walk happy, wagging their tails. Until they get to "The Room", every one of them freaks out and puts on the brakes when we get to the door. It must smell like death or they can feel the sad souls that are left in there, it's strange, but it happens with every one of them. Your dog or cat will be restrained, held down by 1 or 2 vet techs depending on the size and how freaked out they are. Then a euthanasia tech or a vet will start the process. They will find a vein in the front leg and inject a lethal dose of the "pink stuff". Hopefully your pet doesn't panic from being restrained and jerk. I've seen the needles tear out of a leg and been covered with the resulting blood and been deafened by the yelps and screams. They all don't just "go to sleep", sometimes they spasm for a while, gasp for air and defecate on themselves.

Breed-specific legislation is an ineffective solution to animal control problems because it fails to address the heart of the issue—irresponsible ownership. Responsible owners who are already complying with local animal control laws will be unfairly punished by this legislation, and many well-behaved dogs of the targeted breeds will be mercilessly and needlessly killed. Meanwhile, irresponsible owners will continue to make problems for their communities regardless of whether they own a breed targeted by this legislation or not. A better use of taxpayer funds would be concentrating animal control efforts on irresponsible dog owners who do not adequately care for or control their animals, and on individual dogs whose behavior demonstrates that they are a problem for their community. Instead of spending thousands euthanizing good dogs, consider taking some of this money and create spay & neuter programs to cut down on unwanted dogs that might be adopted by irresponsible people. This will ensure that all well-behaved dogs of the targeted breeds will not be exterminated by the State of Montana.

I respectfully ask that you support responsible dog owners by opposing any breed-specific legislation.

Sincerely,

Nicole Thompson
Stevensville, MT

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FIND THE PITBULL

Only one of the pictures below features the real American PitBull Terrier. Take the test to see if you can find it. To find the breed of a dog, click on image. Note there are no mixes or rescue dogs of unknown background who's breed could be debated. All dogs have been picked from breeders' websites and should be good representatives of their breed.

When you are done, ask your family and friends to take to test and watch the results. For many people, a Pit Bull is a a big headed dog, or a dog with cropped ears. For some it's a brindle dog, a big, stocky dog, or one with an eye patch.

Quite often dogs that attack are identified as pit bulls when they are not. There are 20+ breeds that are commonly incorrectly identified as pit bulls. Visit [Understand-a-bull](#) for more information.



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1. Boxer
2. Bogue de Bordeaux
3. Alpha Blue Blood Bulldog
4. Great Swiss Mountain Dog
5. Vizsla
6. Rhodesian Ridgeback
7. Dogo Argentino
8. Labrador Retriever
9. Bullmastiff
10. Jack Russell
11. Fila Brasileiro
12. Rottweiler
13. Presa Canario
14. American Bulldog
15. Cane Corso
16. American Pit Bull Terrier
17. Patterdale Terrier
18. Olde English Bulldog
19. Catahoula
20. Bull Terrier
21. Black Mouth Cur
22. Alano Espanol
23. Boerboel
24. Ca de Bou
25. Thai Ridgeback

Representative Elsie Arntzen, Chair
Montana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

RE: Oppose Breed Specific Legislation

Dear Representative Arntzen:

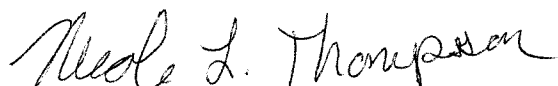
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Breed-specific legislation is an ineffective solution to animal control problems because it fails to address the heart of the issue—irresponsible ownership. Responsible owners who are already complying with local animal control laws will be unfairly punished by this legislation, and many well-behaved dogs of the targeted breeds will be mercilessly and needlessly killed. Meanwhile, irresponsible owners will continue to make problems for their communities regardless of whether they own a breed targeted by this legislation or not. A better use of taxpayer funds would be concentrating animal control efforts on irresponsible dog owners who do not adequately care for or control their animals, and on individual dogs whose behavior demonstrates that they are a problem for their community. This will ensure that all well-behaved dogs of the targeted breeds will not be exterminated by the State of Montana.

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